

The Glory of the Cross

There are two important verses that refer to the cross.

One verse refers to boasting about the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ,

Galatians 6:14, *“May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world”.*

The other verse refers to carrying our cross

Luke 9:23 *“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me”.*

The Apostle Paul could have boasted about his noble birth, his education, his marvelous conversion on the road to Damascus and in his call to be an apostle. Of course he is not talking about the value of the wood. To what does he refer? Dr. Martin Luther, the great reformer said that Paul is glorying in the shame and persecution he is suffering as a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. He lists his sufferings in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27.

I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

We have no idea who will be asked to suffer for Christ. We teach our students to be ready and prepared to suffer for Christ. In Acts 5 we have the account of the disciples being punished and beaten by the High Court for teaching and preaching in the Name of Jesus. In verse 41 of chapter 5 we read that the apostles left the court room rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the name of Jesus. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

He is also referring to the preaching of the Cross, 1 Corinthians 1:17-18

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God”.

In the Cross of Christ we find salvation John 3:16

“For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.”

In the Cross of Christ we find forgiveness 1 John 1:7

“But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”

In the Cross of Christ we find hope.

The cross is empty. We focus on a risen Christ. The Bible teaches us in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 that the resurrection of Jesus Christ guarantees our resurrection.

In the Cross of Christ we find life.

Jesus died to bring us life for ever and ever.

In the cross of Christ we find strength to fight the devil.

“It is finished” He cried out. The sin question was dealt with once and for all.

In the cross of Christ we find victory.

Death and the devil were defeated

In the cross of Christ we find reconciliation.

Reconciliation with God and also Reconciliation of men to men. Even the Roman Centurion who was ordered to crucify the Lord Jesus witnessed everything on the cross. His conclusion? He praised God and said “Surely this was a righteous man” One of the criminals He was crucified with Jesus was also reconciled to God. Jesus told him, “Today you will be with me in paradise”.

In the cross of Christ we see our own crucifixion.

He represented us and we died with Him.

Galatians 2:20 *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*

They are not His sins for which Jesus died but yours and mine. Christ suffered in our stead.

In the cross of Christ we see union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

By the living bond of faith we have become one with the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the cross of Christ we find out who we are.

We are sinners and the Bible says that the wages of sin is death. Death means separation. Sin separates us from a Holy God.

In the cross of Christ we see God reaching down in love and meeting a sinful man.

In the cross of Christ we see the ultimate sacrifice. Jesus gave His life so that we may live.

At the cross of Christ there is room for all of us, there is room for you.

Let not your sin or your unbelief keep you from coming to the cross. Even today the Lord Jesus is saying "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest". Matthew 11:28

Then in Luke 9:23 we learn about the requirements of being a follower and a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ,

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me".

This refers to daily cross bearing. The cross was a tremendous burden to the Lord Jesus. He finally collapsed and some one named Simon of Syrene helped Jesus to carry His cross. Take up our cross daily refers to daily burdens and problems we all have in life. We must be prepared to carry these burdens without complaining and grumbling. God provided Simon of Syrene to help His Son. So God also provides you and me with friends and associates to help us carry the cross. Some times a total stranger will come by and help us carry the burdens of life.

In 1913 George Bernard wrote a beautiful hymn based on Hebrews 12:2

*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith,
who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its
shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Shall we sing together this hymn that has been translated in all the world's major languages.

On a hill far away stood and old rugged cross, the emblem of suffering and shame...